

FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: May 12, 2016

Agenda Item: 2016/2017 Furbearer Seasons and 2016 Quotas

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Proposed

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 45 Min

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Background

Furbearer season structure and quotas are defined by the F&W Commission. Proposed changes for 2016 are addressed below. All other season elements and quotas, including fisher quotas, are proposed as unchanged from 2015.

- Statewide: Establish trapping setbacks on federal and state public land for all species at all times to reduce the likelihood of unintentional capture of dogs. This change will extend the regulations and setbacks we currently have for wolves and furbearers during trapping season to year-round for all species including predators such as coyotes and non-game wildlife such as foxes.
- Region 1: Increase otter quota from 23 to 28.
- Region 2: Increase bobcat quota from 180 to 200.
- Region 6: Decrease swift fox quota from 30 to 10.

More detailed justifications for the above proposed changes and a justification for maintaining the fisher quota in Region 2 are in the commission packet.

Public Involvement Process & Results

Regional FWP staff attends annual District meetings of the Montana Trappers Association each spring. The public comment period for any proposal approved for public comment will run through 5 p.m., Friday, June 17, with any final adoptions at the July 14 commission meeting.

Alternative and Analysis

Proposals provide sound furbearer management to include trapping with consideration of comments and concerns from other user groups. The intent is to reasonably *share* the landscape, associated resources and opportunities to the extent possible. Proposals for bobcat, otter and swift fox quotas include current information assembled by regional FWP staff.

Agency Recommendation and Rationale: Recommend maintaining 2015 structure and quotas except for the proposed changes above. This is consistent with existing information and represents reasonable and appropriate consideration of user groups and the continued presence of contemporary data in furbearer management that include trapping.

Proposed Motion

I move to approve for public comment the proposed 2015 furbearer season structure and quota changes as proposed by the department.